

"THE IDIOT" ON M. O.

A Suppressed Chapter of "Coffee and Repartee" by J. K. Bangs.

Glorious Times Coming, When Each Passenger Will Be Paid For Riding on the Street Cars—Morris Chairs, Desks and Carnegie Libraries to Be Provided—The City to Pay the Bill.

"I see," said the idiot as he folded up the morning paper and sat on it so that his fellow boarders might not come into possession, "that the municipal marshmallow and peanut brittle plant at Holokus has been sold to the candy trust, and the dream of comparatively free and absolutely pure marshmallows and peanut brittle under the control of the city fathers has turned out to be a mere bit of bankrupted idleness."

"It's all idleness—the whole municipal ownership scheme," said Mr. Brief, the lawyer. "It's a bubble without even the soap."

"Oh, I don't think that," said the idiot. "Seems to me it's a pretty good scheme, only they ought to make it comprehensive. What I want to see is the day when the municipality owns everything that now fills the individ-



EACH PASSENGER WILL BE PROVIDED WITH A MORRIS CHAIR.

ual with care, from the toothache and appendicitis up to the trolleys, theaters and theosophy. Did you ever think, Dr. Squills, of what a fine thing it would be to operate on the body politic for a case of municipal appendicitis?"

"I have never let my mind dwell upon so fertile a field for thought—no," said the doctor. "It would be rather difficult, wouldn't it?"

"I suppose it would," returned the idiot. "I suppose it would be next to impossible to sterilize the whole city government before you began to grapple around in its insides after the offending vermin, but if it could be done wouldn't it be fine? Just think of getting rid of all the useless and inflated members of the body politic as easily as man now sheds his personally conducted trouble with his insuards."

"Do you really believe that government could run the trolleys as well as they are run by individuals?" asked Mr. Brief.

"If they couldn't they'd better get out of business," said the idiot. "I don't see why they can't run street railways as well as they run the street manufacturing department. And think how nice it would be—how much envy, hatred and malice would disappear if the people owned the trolley! For instance, when you and I see Mr. J. Williboy Duckington hiking up the pike in his automobile!"

"His what?" demanded the lawyer. "His automobile," said the idiot. "It's a machine run by gasoline that breeds trouble of its own power. When we see old Williboy scooting along in his car and I turn pale pink with envy because we haven't anything of the kind to keep us awake nights and before the police courts of all the counties 'twixt Cattaraugus and Kennebunk. We're too poor to pay even for that long and tolerably consistent scent that lies in the trail of it, and we gnash our teeth to think that we never can get our pictures in the Sunday papers because we shall never own one of those machines. But if we as citizens of this metropolis owned the trolleys it would be different. When the Green avenue and Gompers square cars go by we would look at its brilliantly lit electric interior and smile with satisfaction. 'That is my new Williboy,' we'd say to our country cousins who were visiting us. Then we'd nod politely to the chauffeur, and he'd stop and take us aboard, and by and by the conductor would come through and hand us all a nickel!"

"What in thunder are you talking about? What on earth would the conductor hand you a nickel for?" demanded the lawyer. "For riding on the car, of course," said the idiot. "That's the scheme, isn't it?"

"Oh, is it?" laughed the lawyer. "Well, I guess that's the way some people look at it. What is your precise idea of municipal ownership, anyway?"

"Why," said the idiot, "as I understand the propaganda of the M. O. people as expounded on the editorial pages of the sporting extras of the New York Evening Tribune and the Chicago Daily William Randolph, municipal ownership means the grabbing of everything in sight that has a cash register and a meter attached to it, sending the original owners to jail for life and manning what's left for the benefit of the people. In the case of the trolleys all the enormous profits derived from the nefarious practice now in operation of carrying a passenger ninety miles for a nickel are to be turned back to hot polloi in the shape of annual dividends with blue trading stamps with every dollar's worth, which on presentation at the office of any gas company in the United States will entitle the bearer to free gas for the rest of his natural life.

"The expected improvements in the public service will lie along the betterment of cars, an increased urbanity on the part of the motormen and conductors and a far greater regard for beauty in all rapid transit matters. As I understand the situation as to the first improvements, the cars are to be larger

to begin with, better ventilated and without straps. No car will be so small that anybody will ever have to stand in or out of rush hours. Each passenger will be provided with a Morris chair on a swivel, with a writing desk and an electric light attached, stationery and typewriters to be had on application to the conductor. At one end of each car there will be a Carnegie library and a reading room, with all the magazines and weeklies on file, and at the other a buffet where soft drinks will be dispensed by the best mixers the politicians can drum up. In the advertising panels that run around the walls of the car, instead of these being merely prizes of patent medicines, face powders, breakfast foods and corsets, elevating literature will be printed by such authors as Dicky Davis, Ella Wheeler Wilcox and Henry James, with a college graduate on the rear platform to explain the paragraphs of the last named author to those who do not understand reformer rhetoric. Ladies will be escorted to their seats by bellboys, and every car will have a chaperon, aided by a competent bouncer to see that attractive looking shoppers, dainty little widows and others of the female persuasion are able to travel a block without being ogled off the car by vagrom drummers and lads from the smoke regions lately come into possession of their fathers' hard earned savings.

"All the motormen will be put through a course of instruction in good manners, so that when a lady on a street corner holds up her finger as a sign that she would like to get aboard, instead of cutting her dead, as many of them do at present, and going ahead as though the company didn't want any passengers, they will stop the car, lift their hats like a pack of Chesterfields, gather up her bundles, call her attention to the weather, express the hope that her family are all enjoying good health and see to it that she gets inside the car without falling on her face or sitting unexpectedly down in the lap of an entire stranger. The conductors will be similarly trained, only they will be rather better educated than the man on the front platform. I can think of no better way to show what the conductors will be than to say that they will resemble the modern policeman, that fine flower of the municipal ownership of the constabulary.

"You know what happens if you ask a policeman anything. He at once touches his helmet in respectful salutation, flicks the dust from the breast of his blue coat and places himself on duty at your service. Anything you want to know he tells you with a pleasant smile or with an expression of deep and poignant regret informs you that he is not at the moment in possession of the information you seek, but will find out at the earliest possible opportunity and send word by special delivery post if you will kindly give him your address. All of you who have had that experience with a policeman will know what to expect from the municipal ownership conductor. The city fathers as represented by their commissioner of trolleys will take the same care in the selection of the men that they now take through the police commissioner in the selection of the preservers of the peace, so that we may rest easy as to the superior morale of the force.

"Then, as for the roadbed, which is nowadays something of an eyesore in certain localities, the trolley commissioners will seek the co-operation of



MANNERS LIKE A CHESTERFIELD.

the commissioner of parks. Beautiful hedges of Japanese japonica will conceal the tracks from public gaze. At each street corner will be flower beds, in which the number of the street is set forth in growing plants. Trailing arbutus and Virginia creeper or wisteria vines will cover the trolley poles, and in time, when these have had a chance to grow, the whole trolley line will look like a beautiful floral and leafy arbor, and people living along the line, instead of looking out upon a ugly highway of steel and iron and wire, will gaze upon what appears to be a stretch of Eden running through their midst. Now, what could be better?

"It seems perfectly lovely," said Mrs. Pedagog, the idiot's landlady, enthusiastically.

"Who's going to pay for all this?" asked Mr. Brief. "You people don't seem to take the cost of these things into consideration."

"Who pays for the parks, the police, the fire department?" asked the idiot. "It will all come out of the pockets of the city, of course. All the city has to do is to establish a municipal printing establishment and publish a few bonds whenever the sinking fund gets below the water line. Say they need a hundred million to start with. That means only a hundred thousand bonds of a par value of \$1,000. Or they might get 'em out in smaller denominations of \$100 each, so that the people could buy them and thus put a lot of us in possession of a certificate of ownership. They'd look mighty pretty framed and hung on the wall. The best way to do, however, would be to send them over to England and sell 'em there, for it is an established fact that there is always somebody in England somewhere that will buy anything."

"That remains to be proved," said Mr. Brief.

"Well, all I have to say is that if you'll pay my expenses to London and back, guarantee me immunity from prosecution and provide me the certificates I'll have Boston Common

incorporated at \$1,000,000 tomorrow and sell the whole issue at 43 before the first day of next April," said the idiot. "I'll make the late G. Whitaker Wright look like 30 cents."

"That may be, but they'd prosecute you just the same. They landed Wright and they landed Hooley for very much the same sort of thing. And after awhile they'd do the same with the city if it put its privately printed bonds for municipal ownership of the trolley on the market," persisted Mr. Brief. "Can't you see that?"

"Yes," said the idiot. "But that's the biggest point for the municipality in the whole business. You can't send a whole city to jail, you know."

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

LOSS \$510,000 A WEEK.

Cost of Municipal Ownership to English Wage Earners.

During the years 1901-05 the rate of wages paid in Great Britain declined to such an extent that at the end of that period the workers were getting \$510,000 less a week than in 1900. The total loss in wages for the five years compared with the wage scale of 1900 was more than \$100,000,000. The figures are taken from a report from the first half of last year, but the increase is but a bagatelle compared with the enormous loss recorded above.

As England is the country where government and municipal ownership is most general, these figures show that public ownership does not raise wages in general, but raises the wages of the few at the expense of the many.

This tremendous reduction in wages is due largely to increased taxation caused by the losses of the government and municipal industries, for higher taxes mean higher rents and a general increase in the cost of production, which must be offset in some way if England is to maintain her trade in the face of the world's competition. The wages, and so the wage earner has had to pay for municipal experiments both in lower wages and higher rents.

When the wage earner is asked to vote for municipal ownership he should bear in mind that at the same time he would vote for all that goes with it—higher living expenses and lower wages, perhaps no wages at all. Who benefits? The politician who gets a new popular issue, the politician's close friends who are put on municipal jobs and the large consumer who gets his service for less than cost. Where does the wage earner come in? He pays the bills.

Philadelphia's Waterworks.

The Philadelphia Public Ledger predicts a general shakeup in the water department as the result of a recent inspection of the pumping stations. It states that evidence of neglect and inefficiency was found on every hand. This is not surprising in view of the fact that some of the "engineers" in charge of pumping stations were originally appointed as coal heavers and owe to political influence their promotion to their present responsible positions. The officials admit that the condition is serious, as much of the machinery is so worn as to be incapable of performing anything like its full duty. It is also admitted that much of the material received for repairs, etc., is defective and not in accordance with specifications. This condition has been known to members of the council for years.

Unfair Distribution of Cost.

A special dispatch from Kirkwood, Mo., to the Chicago Tribune states that the municipal electric light plant of that city has proved a failure. The generating plant will be shut down, and electricity will be purchased from a private company at one-third of what it has cost the city to make it. The city will sell to its customers at a price high enough to enable it to light the streets without cost to the taxpayers. This is typical of municipal ownership inequity—to force the users of electricity to pay for all the street lighting, although they are not benefited any more than the citizens who use gas or oil.

Failure of Municipal Bakeries.

The failure of the municipal bakeries at Catania, Italy, is reported by Mr. Churchill, the British consul at Palermo. There was a \$30,000 deficit in the balance sheet, and the request governing a loan of \$80,000 was refused by a royal commission. In consequence the institution has been closed.—United States Consular Reports.

Plugs of Tea.

"Plugs of tea, not unlike plugs of tobacco, are used by the Russian poor," says a globe trotter. "This is a low grade of tea, the stems are mixed with the leaves, and all are pressed together by means of an adhesive gum into a hard cake, or plug. A very strong and bitter cup of tea is made out of these tea plugs, a cup that would give you or me a nervous headache. But the moujik is used to it, and he will drink twenty or thirty cups of plug tea along with black bread, raw onions and salt fish and afterward light his cigarette with as contented a sigh as you or I will heave on Thanksgiving day at the end of a nine course turkey dinner."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Patti and the Emperor.

A pretty story is told of Patti's friendship for the old Emperor William I. of Germany. Once when she was singing at Hamburg the king sent her a message asking her to walk with him in the morning when he took the waters. "Certainly not," replied the prima donna to the bearer of the message. "I get up early for no king in Europe." In later years when the emperor, then an infirm old man, sent to ask her to visit him in his box, apologizing for being unable to go to her behind the scenes, she replied, with tears in her eyes, "Oh, now, sire, I would run anywhere to see you."

THE PLAIN GIRL.

What She Must Do to Render Herself Attractive.

The plain girl must not be ill tempered. If she has plain features, she need not have an ugly disposition. She must be as sunny in her expression that she makes those who look at her forget how plain she is.

The unattractive girl can always have attractive hands. She can take great care of her nails and can polish them until they are as pink as rose leaves and as glossy as marble. She can put soothing and beautifying creams upon them to make them white and massage them until they are plump.

The plain girl can learn to walk well. There is no reason why she should not hold her shoulders erect and walk gracefully. She can also have a good figure, and she can dress well. The ugly girl can speak prettily and in this way add charm to her personality. She can be graceful too. The fact that nature did not give her a naturally pretty face need not keep her from being graceful.

The ugly girl should have virtues of heart, says Woman's Life. She should cultivate a kind heart. A good heart shines through the eyes. You can tell the minute you look at a person, and how one loves a person with a kind heart instinctively and with a gush of tender gratitude!

HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY.

Purchasing Supplies in Bulk or in Small Quantities.

The question of whether it is better to buy family supplies in bulk or more according to the "hand to mouth" plan is not to be answered without reservation. Undoubtedly when the family is large and the mistress of the household will give attention to the manner in which the supplies are used, considerable may be saved by buying in bulk. But even this means the supposition that there is room enough for the stores. It would be a poor attempt at economy to increase rent merely to gain room for supplies on which the saving must be an accumulation of small amounts.

Unless the mistress of a home has good control over herself and servants she ought not to buy in bulk. It takes a good deal of will power and more business methods than exist in most houses not to become slack when there is an abundance of everything on hand. "Never mind; there is plenty more," becomes a frequent excuse for a little waste that may aggregate as much as was saved by buying in large quantities. There is no place to keep perishable fruits and vegetables in a small house, and it is much wiser to waive the small per cent of saving that theoretically would be made by buying in bulk and let the marketman bear the loss in these supplies by spoiling. Be content to help him out by paying a trifle more.—Exchange.

LAUNDRY LINES.

When ironing, move the iron with the weave of the goods and iron until perfectly dry.

If a wash tub which leaks must be used before it can be properly mended, fill the cracks from the outside with common soap.

Have a short piece of hose to attach to the water faucet and extend to the wash tubs to fill them and save time, lifting and a backache.

If your wash boiler should rust, make a lining of unbleached cotton to fit it. Use the cover to cut a pattern of the bottom piece. This is a splendid way to keep clothes from getting spots of iron rust on them.

If the woman who has to prepare the clothes in the wash for ironing day will take the trouble to fold them carefully when they come from the line and will not crumple them into masses of wrinkles in the basket before the folding begins, she will find the time required for ironing reduced appreciably.

Setting the Table.

In the well regulated household the setting of the table is an important and carefully executed duty, for by the manner in which the table is laid can be judged the degree of refinement and taste of the housewife.

A few definite and simple rules are here given:

Lay the cloth even and straight.

Place the knives and spoons at the right of the plates, with the handles just reaching the edge of the table, the knives nearest the plates, with the sharp edges toward them, the bowls of the spoons up.

Place the forks at the left, with the tines up. On the right and at the point of the knife place the tumbler.

The napkin should be folded flat and placed at one side.

Witch Hazel Cold Cream.

Witch hazel cold cream is made thus: Nine ounces of white petrolatum, one and a half ounces of white wax, one and a half ounces of spermaceti and three ounces of distilled extract of witch hazel. Melt the first three ingredients together, allow to cool to some extent, then add the witch hazel extract and stir. When nearly cool add a few drops of oil of rose. Witch hazel cream is very pleasant for a rough, sensitive complexion.

The Restless Child.

"It is a good sign," says a recognized authority, "for children to be energetic and restless up to seven years of age, but restlessness after that age is a bad sign, a sign of feverish, nervous conditions incident to growth of a healthy sort. Such restlessness should be curbed and a daily full nap insisted upon. This will generally be found to promote the desired result."

A Wonderful Happening.

Port Byron, N. Y., has witnessed one of the most remarkable cases of healing ever recorded. Amos F. King, of that place says: "Bucklen's Arnica Salve cured a sore on my leg with which I had suffered over 80 years. I am now eighty-five." Guaranteed to cure all sores, by Wm. Kipp's Sons, druggists. 25c.



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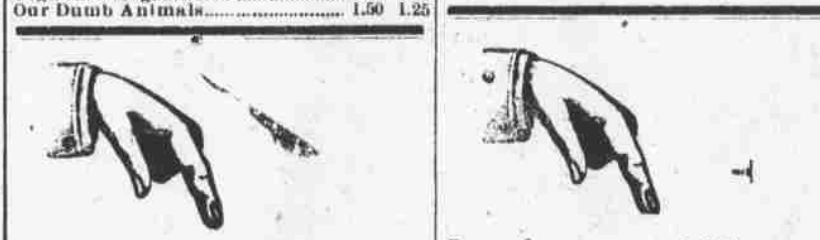
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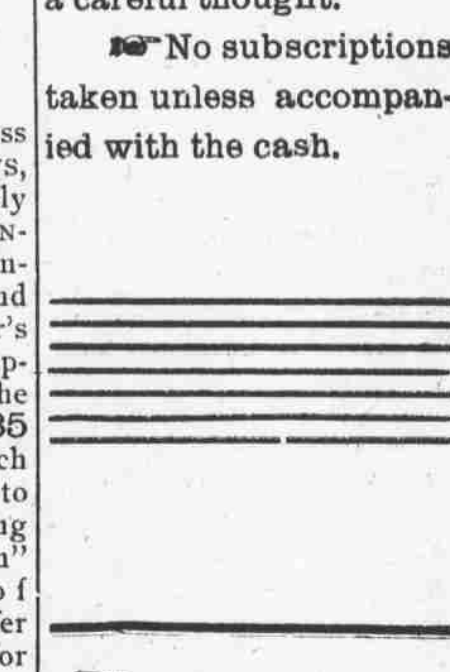
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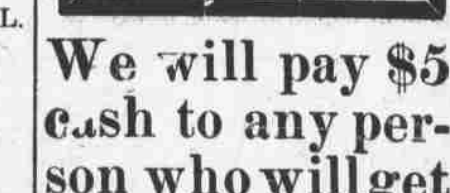
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